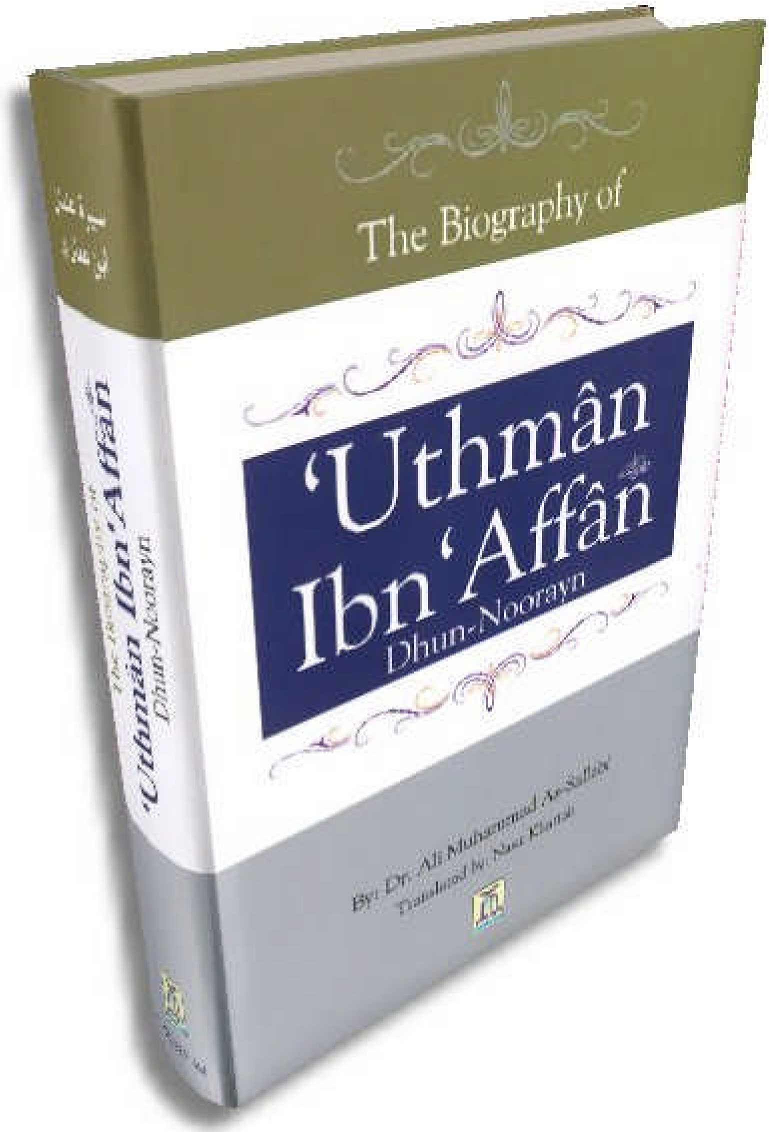
The Biography of `Uthman Ibn `Affan - Dhun-Noorayn



Chapter 1

‘Uthman Ibn `Affan radiyallaahu`anhu Dhun-Noorayn Between Makkah And Madinah

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His name, lineage, kunyah and nicknames

1 – He was ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan ibn Abi’l-‘Aas ibn Umayyah ibn ‘Abd Shams ibn ‘Abd Manaf ibn Qusayy ibn Kilab.[1] His lineage coincides with that of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) in ‘Abd Manaf. His mother was Arwa bint Kurayz ibn Rabee’ah ibn Habeeb ibn ‘Abd Shams ibn ‘Abd Manaf ibn Qusayy.[2] Her mother was Umm Hakeem al-Baydah’ bint ‘Abd al-Muttalib, who was the full sister of ‘Abd-Allah, the father of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and it was said that they were twins (this was narrated by al-Zubayr ibn Bakkar). So he was the son of the cousin (daughter of paternal aunt) of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), and the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was the cousin (son of maternal uncle) of his mother. The mother of ‘Uthman became Muslim and died during the caliphate of her son ‘Uthman, and he was among those who carried her to her grave.[3] ‘Uthman’s father died during the Jahiliyyah.

2 – His kunyah during the Jahiliyyah was Abu ‘Amr. When Ruqayyah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) bore him a son, he named him ‘Abd-Allah and took his kunyah from him so the Muslims called him by the kunyah of Abu ‘Abd-Allah.[4]

3 – ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu was known by the nickname Dhun-Noorayn (the one with the two lights). Badr al-Deen al’Ayni said in his commentary on Saheeh al-Bukhari that it was said to al-Muhallab ibn Abi Sufrah[5] : Why was ‘Uthman called Dhun-Noorayn? He said: Because we did not know anyone who married two daughters of a Prophet except him.[6] ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Umar ibn Aban al-Ju’fi said: My maternal uncle Husayn al-Ju’fi said to me: O my son, do you know why ‘Uthman was called Dhun-Noorayn? I said: I do not know. He said: No one else was ever married to two daughters of a Prophet, from the time Allah created Adam until the Hour will begin, except ‘Uthman. Hence he was called Dhun-Noorayn.[7] And it was said that he was called Dhun-Noorayn because he used to recite a great deal of Qur’an in his prayer every night, and the Qur’an is light and praying qiyam al-layl is light.[8]

4 – His birth. He was born in Makkah six years after the Year of the Elephant, according to the correct view.[9] And it was said that he was born in al-Ta'if. He was about five years younger than the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam).[10]

5 – His physical attributes; he was neither short nor tall, soft skinned, with a huge thick beard, big-boned, broad-shouldered, with thick hair on his head, and he used to dye his beard with saffron. Az-Zuhri said; 'Uthman was a man of average height, with handsome hair and face and a bald spot; he was bow-legged[11], with a hooked nose, big calves, and long arms that were covered with hair. He had the most handsome mouth of all people, his hair came down below his ears, and he had a handsome face. It most likely that he was white-skinned, and it was said that he was dark skinned.[12]

His Family

'Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu married eight wives in all, all of them after Islam. They were: Ruqayyah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) who bore him 'Abd-Allah ibn 'Uthman. Then he married Umm Kulthoom the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), after Ruqayyah died. He also married Fakhitah bint Ghazwan, who was the sister of the governor 'Utbah ibn Ghazwan, and she bore 'Uthman 'Abd-Allah the younger; Umm 'Amr bint Jundub al-Azdiyyah, who bore 'Uthman 'Amr, Khalid, Aban, 'Umar and Maryam. And he married Fatimah bint al-Waleed ibn 'Abd Shams ibn al-Mugheerah al-Makhzoomiyyah, who bore him al-Waleed, Sa'eed and Umm Sa'ad. And he married Umm al-Baneen bint 'Uyaynah ibn Husn al-Fizariyyah, who bore him 'Abd-Allah. And he married Ramlah bint Shaybah ibn Rabee'ah al-Umawiyyah, who bore him 'Aa'ishah, Umm Aban and Umm 'Amr. Ramlah became Muslim and swore allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam). And he married Na'ilah bint al-Farafisah al-Kalbiyyah, who was a Christian, then she became Muslim before he consummated the marriage with her and she became a good Muslim.[13]

He had nine sons from five wives. They were: 'Abd-Allah, whose mother was Ruqayyah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam). He was born two years before the Hijrah and his mother took with her when she migrated with her husband 'Uthman to Madinah. During his first days in Madinah a rooster pecked him on the face, near his eye, and the (infection) spread until it covered his face. He died in 4AH when he was six years old.[14]

His other sons were:

'Abd-Allah the younger, whose mother was Fakhitah bint Ghazwan; 'Amr, whose mother was Umm 'Amr bint Jundub, he narrated hadeeth from his father and from Usamah ibn Zayd, and 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab and Abu'l-Zinnad narrated from him, but he narrated only a few hadeeth. He married Ramlah bint Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, and died in 80 AH.

Khalid whose mother was Umm 'Amr bint Jundub.

Aban, whose mother was Umm'Amr bint Jundub. He was a leading scholar of fiqh, and was known by the kunyah of Abu Sa'eed. He was governor of Madinah for seven years during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan. He narrated a few ahadeeth, including the hadeeth that he narrated from 'Uthman:

"Whoever says at the beginning of each day and night: 'In the name of Allah with Whose name nothing can cause harm on earth or in heaven, and He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing,' nothing will harm him that day or that night."

When Aban became paralyzed on one side, he said: By Allah, I forgot this du'a' so the decree of Allah befell me.[15]

He was regarded as one of the fuqaha' of Madinah of his time. He died in 105AH.[16]

‘Umar, whose mother was Umm ‘Amr bint Jundub.

Al-Waleed, whose mother was Fatimah bint al-Waleed al-Makhzoomiyyah. He became the governor of Khorasan in 56 AH at the time of Mu’awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan.

‘Abd al-Malik, whose mother was Umm al-Baneen bint ‘Uyaynah ibn Husn. He died in childhood.

And it was said that Na’ilah bint al Farafisah bore ‘Uthman a son who was named ‘Anbasah.[17]

He had seven daughters from five wives, including: Maryam, whose mother was Umm ‘Amr bint Jundub; Umm Sa’eed, whose mother was Fatimah bint al-Waleed ibn ‘Abd Shams al-Makhzoomiyyah; ‘Aa’ishah whose mother was Ramlah bint Shaybah ibn Rabee’ah; Maryam bint ‘Uthman, whose mother was Na’ilah bint al-Farafisah; and Umm al-Baneen, whose mother was a concubine (umm walad).[18]

The full of sister of ‘Uthman was Aaminah bint ‘Affan, who worked as a hairdresser during the Jahiliyyah, then she married al-Hakam ibn Kaysan, the freed slave of Hisham ibn al-Mugheerah al-Makhzoomi. An expedition led by ‘Abd-Allah ibn Jahsh captured al-Hakam ibn Kaysan, and in Madinah he embraced Islam and became a good Muslim. He stayed with the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) until he was killed as a martyr in the battle of Bi’r Ma’oonah, at the beginning of the fourth year after the Hijrah. Aaminah bint ‘Affan stayed in Makkah and remained a mushrik until the Conquest, then she became Muslim along with her mother and the rest of her sisters, and she swore allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) along with Hind bint ‘Uqbah, the wife of Abu Sufyan, pledging not to associate anything with Allah, steal or commit zina.[19]

‘Uthman had three brothers through his mother. They were al-Waleed ibn ‘Uqbah ibn Abi Mu’eet, whose father was killed on the day of Badr when he was a prisoner, and he was a kafir. Al-Waleed went out with his brother ‘Amarah after al-Hudaybiyah to bring back their sister Umm Kulthoom, who had become Muslim and migrated, but the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) refused to give her back. He became Muslim on the day of the Conquest of Makkah.

‘Amarah ibn ‘Uqbah, who was late in coming to Islam.

Khalid ibn ‘Uqbah.

‘Uthman’s sisters through his mother were:

Umm Kulthoom bint ‘Uqbah ibn Abu Mu’eet, who became Muslim in Makkah and migrated and swore allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). She was the first woman to migrate after the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) came back to Madinah after the treaty of al-Hudaybiyah.

Other sisters through his mother were: Umm Hakeem bint ‘Uqbah and Hind bint ‘Uqbah.

His status during the Jahiliyyah

During the Jahiliyyah, ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu was among the best of his people. He was of high status, very wealthy, extremely modest, and eloquent in speech. His people loved him dearly and respected him. He never prostrated to any idol during the Jahiliyyah and he never committed any immoral action. He did not drink alcohol before Islam and he used to say: it (alcohol) destroys reason and reason is the most sublime thing that Allah has given to man, and man should elevate himself by means of reason, not try to destroy it. Similarly, during the Jahiliyyah he was not attracted to songs or entertainment. ‘Uthman also used to refrain from looking at any ‘awrah.[20] May Allah have mercy on ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu for he made it easy for us to get to know him, when he said: “I had no interest in songs, I never committed any immoral deed, and my right hand never touched my private part since I swore allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). I did not drink alcohol during the Jahiliyyah or in Islam, and I did not commit zina

during the Jahiliyyah or in Islam"[21] he was well versed in the knowledge that was available to the Arabs during the Jahiliyyah, including lineages, proverbs, and the history of important-events. He travelled to Syria and Abyssinia, and mixed with non-Arab peoples, learning things about their lives and customs that no one else knew.[22] He took care of the business that he had inherited from his father, and his wealth grew. He was regarded as one of the men of Banu Umayyah who were held in high esteem by all of Quraysh. In the Jahili society of Makkah in which 'Uthman lived, men were respected by their wealth and for the number of children and brothers they had, then for the tribe and people to which they belonged. 'Uthman was regarded as being of high status among his people, and he was loved dearly.

Among the evidence which points to the people's love for 'Uthman because of the combination of good qualities is the report which says that at the time, an Arab woman would sing to her child a song which speaks of the people's respect and love for him:
"By the most Merciful, I love you as much as Quraysh love 'Uthman."[23]

His coming to Islam

'Uthman was thirty four years old when Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq called him to Islam, and he did not hesitate at all, rather he responded immediately to the call of Abu Bakr. Thus he was one of the earliest Muslims, of whom Ibn Ishaq said: The first person to become Muslim after Abu Bakr, 'Ali and Zayd ibn Harithah was 'Uthman.[24] Thus he was the fourth man to embrace Islam. His coming to Islam so early was, perhaps, the result of what happened to him when he was returning from Syria. He told the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) about that when he entered upon him along with Talhah ibn 'Ubayd-Allah and he presented Islam to them and recited Qur'an to them, and told them of the duties of Islam and promised them that they would be honoured by Allah. They believed him, and 'Uthman said: O Messenger of Allah, I have come recently from Syria, and when we were between Ma'an and al-Zarqa', I was about to sleep when I heard a voice calling: O sleepers, get up, for Ahmad has emerged in Makkah. Then we came here and heard about you.[25]

Undoubtedly this incident had a positive effect on 'Uthman and he could not forget it when he could see all the facts before him with his own eyes. How could anyone who heard of the emergence of a Prophet before reaching the city in which he lived, and found upon his arrival that what he had heard was true, then hesitate to respond to the call? No matter how arrogant a man may be, he cannot fail to submit to the truth; if he tries to ignore it his conscience will continue to trouble him until he either believes in it or dies, thus saving himself from the stirrings of his conscience. 'Uthman's quick response was not based on foolishness or rashness, rather it was based on certainty and firm belief that left no room for doubt.[26] He thought about this new call calmly, as was his way in all things, and he found that it was a call to virtue, a call to shun immorality, a call to Tawheed and a warning against shirk, a call to worship Allah and a warning against heedlessness, a call to good morals and a warning against bad morals. Then he looked at his people and saw them worshipping idols, eating dead meat, mistreating their neighbours and regarding as permissible forbidden things such as the shedding of blood, etc.[27] But the Prophet Muhammad ibn 'Abd-ullah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was sincere and trustworthy; he knew nothing but good about him and he had heard nothing bad about him. He was calling for the worship of Allah alone with no partner or associate, and for the upholding of family ties, kind treatment of neighbours, prayer and fasting, and not worshipping anything other than Allah.[28] So he became Muslim at the hands of Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq, and he persisted in his faith, calling others to Islam in a friendly and patient manner; he was content, forgiving, kind, charitable, compassionate and generous, helping the weak and oppressed until Islam became strong.[29]

His marriage to Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam)

The Muslims rejoiced greatly when 'Uthman became Muslim and the bonds of love and brotherhood between him and them were strengthened when Allah honoured him with marriage to the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), Ruqayyah. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu

‘alayhi wa sallam) had given her in marriage to ‘Utbah ibn Abi Lahab, and he had given her sister Umm Kulthoom in marriage to ‘Uthaybah ibn Abi Lahab, but when Surah al-Masad was revealed

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ
مَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ
سَيَصْلَى نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ
وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ
فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ

“Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab (an uncle of the Prophet) and perish he! His wealth and his children will not benefit him! He will be burnt in a Fire of blazing flames! And his wife, too, who carries wood (thorns of Sa’dan which she used to put on the way of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) or used to slander him). In her neck is a twisted rope of Masad (palm fibre)”(Al-Masad 111:1-5)

Abu Lahab and their mother Umm Jameel bint Harb ibn Umayyah – the “carrier of wood” – told them to leave the daughters of Muhammad, so they separated from them before they had consummated the marriage with them, as an honour to them from Allah and as a humiliation to the sons of Abu Lahab.[30] No sooner did ‘Uthman hear the news of the divorce of Ruqayyah but he was filled with joy and he hastened to propose marriage to her through the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) gave her in marriage to him, and the Mother of the Believers Khadeejah bint Khuwaylid prepared her and presented her to him. ‘Uthman was one of the most handsome men of Quraysh and she competed with him in beauty and gracefulness. It was said to her when she was presented to him:

The best looking couple anyone has ever seen, is Ruqayyah and her husband ‘Uthman.[31]

It was narrated from ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Uthman al-Qurashi that the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) entered upon his daughter when she was washing the head of ‘Uthman and he said:

“O my daughter, take good care of Abu ‘Abdullah, for he is the closest companions to me in attitude.”[32]

Umm Jameel bint Harb and her husband Abu Lahab thought that by divorcing Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthoom that they would deal a harsh blow to the family of Muhammad (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) or at least weaken them, but Allah chose good for Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthoom, which caused a great deal of frustration and anger for Umm Jameel and Abu Lahab, and they did not achieve anything. Thus Allah sufficed the household of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) against their evil. And the Command of Allah is a decree determined.

His persecution and migration to Abyssinia

Allah’s decree that all are to be tested is applied constantly to individuals, communities, peoples and nations. This applied to the Sahabah too, and they underwent trials and tribulations that would shake the foundation of lofty mountains. They spent their wealth and shed their blood for the sake of Allah, and this suffering became as severe as Allah willed that it should. The prominent Muslims were not spared these trials. ‘Uthman was persecuted and tortured for the sake of Allah at the hands of his paternal uncle al-Hakam ibn Abi’l-‘Aas ibn Umayyah who caught him and tied him up, and said: “Will you turn away from the religion of your forefathers for a new religion? By Allah, I will not let you until you give up this religion?.” ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu said: “By Allah, I will never give it up or leave it.” When al-Hakam saw his steadfastness in adhering to his religion, he let him go.[33]

The persecution intensified and affected all the Muslims, to such an extent that Yasir and his wife Sumayyah were killed. The Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was deeply grieved, and wondered where could the Muslims go? Then the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) thought of Abyssinia and said to the Muslims: “Why don’t you go to Abyssinia, for in (that land) there is a righteous king in whose land no one is wronged.”[34]

The migration (hijrah) began, and the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was saddened to see groups of believers sneaking out of Makkah[35] and travelling by sea. Some left riding, and others left on foot, and they continued marching until they reached the coast of the Red Sea. Then they appointed ‘Uthman ibn Maz’oon as their leader and by the grace of Allah they found two ships which they embarked in return for half a dinar for each person. Quraysh found out about that and they set off in hot pursuit, but when they reached the coast, the two ships had already set sail.[35]

Among those who migrated during the first and second migration to Abyssinia was ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, and on both occasions he was accompanied by his wife Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). They arrived in Abyssinia in Rajab in the fifth year after the Prophet’s mission began, and they found safety, security and freedom of worship.

The Qur’an speaks of the migration of the early Muslims to Abyssinia, as Allah says:

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُواْ فِي اللّهِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا ظُلِمُواْ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَلأَجْرُ الآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُواْ يَعْلَمُونَ

“And as for those who emigrated for the Cause of Allah, after they had been wronged, We shall certainly give them goodly residence in this world, but indeed the reward of the Hereafter will be greater; if they but knew!”(Al-Nahl 16:41)

al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) quoted Qatadah (may Allah have mercy on him) as saying: What is referred to here is the companions of Muhammad (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), who were oppressed by the mushrikeen in Makkah and expelled, until a group of them migrated to Abyssinia, then Allah granted them a place to which to migrate (i.e. Madinah) and granted them supporters from among the believers.[36]

And Allah says:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُم بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

“Say (O Muhammad (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam): “O My slaves who believe (in the Oneness of Allah- Islamic Monotheism), fear your Lord (Allah) and keep your duty to Him. Good is (the reward) for those who do good in this world, and Allah’s earth is spacious (so if you cannot worship Allah at a place, then go to another)! Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full, without reckoning”(Al-Zumar 39:10)

Ibn ‘Abbas radiyallaahu`anhu said: This refers to Ja’far ibn Abi Talib and those who went with him to Abyssinia.[37]

‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu benefited from this migration, as he gained experience and learned lessons that would stand him in good stead later in his blessed life. Among the most important of these lessons were the following:

1 – The steadfastness of the believers in adhering to their faith after the infliction of all kinds of persecution and torture by the misguided evildoers is a sign of their sincere faith and high spiritual standing, as their peace of mind, contentment, and hope for the pleasure of Allah was far greater than the torture, deprivation and pain that affected their bodies, because what matters most for the sincere believers and da’iyahs is their spiritual aspirations, not their physical needs. So they hastened to fulfil the needs of their souls and paid less attention to their bodies’ needs for rest, fulfilment and pleasure. Thus the call to Allah prevailed and the masses were freed from darkness and ignorance.[38]

2 – ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu learned from the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) compassion towards the ummah. His compassion was demonstrated when he became caliph and before that, when he lived in Madinah at the time of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them). He saw with his own eyes the compassion of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) towards his companions and his deep concern to guarantee their safety and security. Hence he suggested to them that they go to that just king in whose land no one was oppressed. And it turned out to be as he (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) had said; they were safe and free to practise their religion, and they stayed there on the best terms.[39] The Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) is the one who suggested Abyssinia; he is the one who chose a safe

place for his community and his message, so that it was protected from being wiped out. This is how the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) trained Muslim leaders in every era to plan wisely and with farsightedness in order to protect the call of Islam and the callers (da’iyahs), and to look for a safe land to be a provisional capital for the call and a centre from which it could operate lest the man centre be exposed to danger, attacked or destroyed. The da’iyahs are a true asset and all efforts should be focused on protecting them, without any negligence or risks that could jeopardize their lives or their safety. One Muslim is equivalent to an earthful of people who are outside of the religion of Allah and do not believe in Tawheed.[40]

3 – ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu learned from the Prophet’s advice to migrate to Abyssinia that risks should be undertaken by those who are close to the leader, his family and relatives; the notion that the leader’s relatives should be kept away from danger and that those who are not related to the leader or are not of high status should be sent to confront danger is far removed from the way of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam).[41] Hence when ‘Uthman became caliph, his relatives were in the forefront of the army. ‘Abd-Allah ibn Abi Sarh led the conquests in Africa, and ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Aamir led the conquests in the east. He commanded Mu’awiyah to travel by sea, accompanied by his wife, and to be at the head of the army. This will be discussed in further detail below when we speak of the conquests.

4 – ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu was the first one of this ummah to migrate to Abyssinia with his family.[42] The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:

“May Allah be with them. ‘Uthman is the first one to migrate with his family for the sake of Allah after Loot.”[43]

When there was a rumour that the people of Makkah had become Muslim, news of that reached the emigrants in Abyssinia, so they came back, but when they drew close to Makkah, they heard what was being said about the people of Makkah becoming Muslim was false. But they entered the city under the protection of some of the people of Makkah. Among those who returned was ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan and his wife Ruqayyah (may Allah be pleased with them both).[44] He settled there until Allah granted permission to Migrate to Madinah. From the day he became Muslim, ‘Uthman stayed close to the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) wherever he was, and he did not leave him except when he migrated with his permission, or went on a mission for which he appointed him, with no one else could do. In staying close to the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) he was like all of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. ‘Uthman had a strong connection to the message of Islam from the first year, and he did not miss any event in the life of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), public or private, nor did he miss any event in the reigns of the first two caliphs; or in other words, he did not miss anything that had to do with the laying of foundations for the Islamic state.[45]

1- At-Tabaqat by Ibn Sa’d, 3/53; Al-Isabah. 4/377, no.5463
2- At-Tamheed wal-Bayan fi Maqtal al-Shaheed ‘Uthman, by Muhammad Yahya al-Andalusi, p.19
3- al-Khilafah al-Rashidah wa’l-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah, by Dr. Yahya al-Yahya, p.388
4- al-Tamheed wa’l-Bayan fi Maqtal al-Shaheed ‘Uthman, p.19
5- He was al-Muhallab ibn Abi Sufrah al-Azdi al-‘Aqali, one of the great commanders, al-Muhallab invaded India during the caliphate of Mu’awiyah, and he was a governor for ibn al-Zubayr. He fought the Khawarij during the caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, then he became governor of Khorasan in 79 AH. He is famous for having fought the Khawarij. He died in 83 AH. See Wafiyat al-A’yan, 5/350; Siyar A’lam An-Nubala’, 4/383
6- ‘Umdat al-Qari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhari, 16/201
7- Sunan al-Bayhaqi, 7/73. Dr. ‘Aatif Lamadah said: a hasan report.
8- ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan Dhu’l-Noorayn, by ‘Abbas al-‘Aqqad, p.79
9- al-Isabah, 4/377, no.5465
10- ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, by Sadiq ‘Arjoon, p.45
11- Tareekh at-Tabari, 5/440
12- Sifat al-Safwah, 1/295; Saheeh al-Tawtheeq fi Seerat wa Hayat Dhi’l-Noorayn, p.15
13- Tareekh at-Tabari, 5/441; al-Tamheed wa’l-Bayan fi Maqtal al-Shaheed ‘Uthman, p.19; al-Ameen Dhu’l-Noorayn, by Mahmoud Shakir, p.364
14- al-Ameen Dhul-Noorayn, by Mahmoud Shakir, p.365, al-Tamheed wa’l-Bayan fi Maqtal al-Shaheed ‘Uthman, p. 19

15- Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Kitabal-Da'wat, no.3388. A saheeh hadeeth.
16- Siyar A'lam an-Nubala' (4/253); Tareekh al-Qada'i, p.308
17- Al-Ameen Dhu'l-Noorayn by Mahmoud Shakir, p.369
18- al-Tamheed wa'l-Bayan fi Maqtal al-Shaheed 'Uthman, p.20
19- Al-Ameen Dhu'l-Noorayn by Mahmoud Shakir, p.346
20- Mawsoo'at al-Tareekh al-Islami, by Ahmad Shalaby, 1/168
21- Hilyat al-Awliya', 1/60,61. This report is saheeh.
22- 'Aqbariyyat 'Uthman by al-Aqqad, p.72.
23- Mawsoo'at al-Tareekh al-Islami, 1/618
24- al-Seerah al-Nabawiyyah by Ibn Hisham, 1/287-289
25- at-Tabaqat by Ibn Sa'd, 3/55
26- Jawlah Tareekhiyyah fi 'Asr al-Khulafa' al-Rashideen, p.302
27- See: Marwiyat al-'Ahd al-Makki, by 'Aadil 'Abd al-Ghafoor, 2/805
28- Fitnah Maqtal 'Uthman, by Dr.Muhammad 'Abd-Allah al-Ghaban, 1/37
29- 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, by Sadiq 'Arjoon, p.53
30- Dhun-Noorayn 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, by Muhammad Rasheed Rida, p.12
31- Ansab al-Ashraf, p.89
32- Narrated by at-Tabarani and the men of its isnad are thiqat (trustworthy), as stated by al-Haythami. Al-Majma' no.14500 (9/81)
33- al-Tamheed wa'l-Bayan fi Maqtal al-Shaheed 'Uthman, p.22
34- al-Hijrah fi'l-Qur'an il-Kareem, p.290; al-Seerah al-Nabawiyyah by Ibn Hisham, 1/413
35- Dima' 'ala Qamees 'Uthman, p.15; al-Tabaqat, 1/204
36- at-Tabaqat, 1/204; Tareekh at-Tabari, 2/69
37- al-Jami'li Ahkam al-Qur'an by al-Qurtubi, 10/107
38- op.cit., 15/24
39- as-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah by Dr. Mustafa al-Siba'i, p.57
40- al-Hijrah fi'l-Qur'an il-Kareem, p.312
41- at-Tarbiyah al-Qiyadiyyah by Muneer al-Ghadban, 1/333
42- as-Sawa'iq al-Mursalah, 1/314
43- al-Ma'rifah wa'l-Tareekh, 3/268; its isnad is da'eef
44- as-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah by Ibn Hisham, 1/402
45- op.cit., p.78

‘Uthman radiyallaahu ’anhu and the Holy Qur’an

The method by means of which ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan and all the noble Sahabah were educated was the Holy Qur’an which was revealed from the Lord of the Worlds. It was the only source of guidance to be accepted. The Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was keen to ensure that the Muslims acquired their concepts from one source only. The Holy Qur’an alone was to be the methodology and focal point on which the Muslim individual, family and society were to be raised. The verses which ‘Uthman heard directly from the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) played a role in the formation of his Islamic personality. They purified his heart and soul and influenced him, and he became a new man, with new values, emotions, aims, behaviour and aspirations.[1]

‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu was deeply attached to the Holy Qur’an. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami narrated how he learned it from the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and his words indicate how greatly he loved to live with the Book of Allah. It was narrated that ‘Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami said: Those who taught the Qur’an – such as ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, ‘Abd-Allah ibn Mas’ood and others – told us that when they learned ten verses from the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) they would not go beyond them until they had learned the knowledge contained in them and how to apply it in deed. They said: So we learned the Qur’an and knowledge and its application together. Hence they would spend a while to memorize a soorah.[2] Allah says:

كِتَابٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُوْلُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

“(This is) a Book (the Qur’an) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember” (Saad 38:29)

‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu narrated that the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:

“The best of you are those who learn the Qur’an and teach it.”[3]

‘Uthman recited the entire Qur’an back to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) before he died. Among the most famous of ‘Uthman’s students in learning Qur’an were Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami, al-Mugheerah ibn Abi Shihab, Abu’l Aswad and Zurr ibn Hubaysh[4]

History has recorded for us some of the things that ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu said about the Holy Qur’an. He said:

“If our hearts were pure, we would never have our fill of the words of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.”[5]

“I would not like the day to come when I do not look in the Covenant of Allah (i.e. the Mus-haf).”[6]

“Three worldly things have been made dear to me: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and reading Qur’an.”[7]

“There are four things which are outwardly virtues, but in reality are obligations: mixing with righteous people is a virtue, and following their example is a duty; reading Qur’an is a virtue and acting upon it is a duty; visiting the graves is a virtue and preparing for death is a duty; and visiting the sick person is a virtue and asking him to make a will is a duty.”[8]

“Ten things are the greatest waste of time: a scholar whom no one asks about; knowledge that is not acted upon; sound advice that is not accepted; a weapon that is not used; a Masjid that is not prayed in; a Mus-haf that is not read from; wealth from which nothing is spent (in charity); a horse that is not ridden; knowledge of asceticism in the heart of one who is seeking worldly gain; and a long life in which no preparation is made for the journey (into the Hereafter).”[9]

‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu was hafidh of Qur’an, and he read Qur’an all the time. He was asked about that and he said: “It is blessed and was brought by a blessed one.”[10] When ‘Uthman died, his Mus-haf was worn out because he had read from it so much.[11]

The wife of ‘Uthman said on the day when he was besieged: ‘Either kill him or leave him alone, for by Allah, he would recite the whole Qur’an in one rak’ah when praying qiyam al-layl.”[12]

The words of Allah –

أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَانِتٌ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُو رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُوْلُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

“Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing (in prayer) during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord (like one who disbelieves)? Say: “Are those who know equal to those who know not?” It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allah’s Signs and Verses)” (Az-Zumar 39:9) – were fulfilled in him.

‘Uthman immersed himself in the principles of Islam and studied at the hands of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) instilled in his heart the meaning of those sublime verses, for he was keen to teach his companions the correct concept of their Lord and His rights over them, knowing souls were purified and their nature (fitrah) became sound. ‘Uthman’s view of Allah, the universe, life, Paradise, Hell, the divine will and decree, the true nature of man and man’s struggle with the Shaytan were all based on the Holy Qur’an and the guidance of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam).

Allah is above having any shortcomings; His are the attributes of infinite perfection. He is One, with no partner or associate, and He has no wife or child. He, may be glorified, has defined this concept of ‘uboodiyyah (complete servitude to Allah) and Tawheed in the Holy Qur’an.[13]

‘Uthman’s view of the universe was based on the verses in which Allah says:

قُلْ أَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ أَندَادًا ذَلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِن فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِّلسَّائِلِينَ
ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ اِئْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ
فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَى فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَحِفْظًا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

“Say (O Muhammad (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam): Do you verily disbelieve in Him who created the earth in two Days? And you set up rivals (in worship) with Him? That is the Lord of the ‘Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists). He placed therein (i.e. the earth) firm mountains from above it, and He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance (for its dwellers) in four Days equal (i.e. all these four ‘days’ were equal in the length of time) for all those who ask (about its creation)…Then He rose over (Istawa) towards the heaven when it was smoke, and said to it and to the earth: ‘Come both of you willingly or unwillingly.’ They both said: ‘We come willingly.’ Then He completed and finished from their creation (as) seven heavens in two Days and He made in each heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest (lowest) heaven with lamps (stars) to be an adornment as well as to guard (from the devils by using them as missiles against the devils). Such is the Decree of Him, the All-Mighty, the All-Knower” (Fussilat 41:9-12)

As for this life, no matter how long it lasts, it will inevitably come to an end, and no matter how great its conveniences and luxuries, they are in fact insignificant. Allah says:

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالأَنْعَامُ حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ
أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَتَاهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلاً أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالأَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“Verily, the likeness of (this) worldly life is as the water (rain) which We send down from the sky; so by it arises the intermingled produce of the earth of which men and cattle eat: until when the earth is clad in its adornments and is beautiful, and its people think that they have all the powers of disposal over it, Our Command reaches it by night or by day and We make it like a clean-mown harvest, as if it had not flourished yesterday! Thus do We explain the Ayat in detail for the people who reflect” (Yoonus 10:24)

‘Uthman’s view of Paradise derived was derived from the verses which describe it, and this concept became a deterrent which prevented him from going astray from the laws of Allah. Anyone who studies the life of ‘Uthman will see how clear the idea of meeting Allah was in his mind, and how

greatly he feared the wrath and punishment of Allah. We will see this in the pages of this book, in sha Allah.

His concept of the Divine will and decree was derived from the Book of Allah and the teachings of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). This concept was firmly entrenched in his heart, and he understood its different categories as mentioned in the Book of Allah. He was certain that the knowledge of Allah encompasses all things:

فِي ذَرَّةٍ مِّثْقَالِ مِن رَّبِّكَ عَن يَعْزُبُ وَمَا فِيهِ تُفِيضُونَ إِذْ دَاشُهُو عَلَيْكُمْ كُنَّا إِلاَّ عَمَلٍ مِنْ تَعْمَلُونَ وَلاَ قُرْآنٍ مِن مِنْهُ تَتْلُو وَمَا شَأْنٍ فِي تَكُونُ وَمَا
مُّبِينٍ كِتَابٍ فِي إِلاَّ أَكْبَرَ وَلا ذَلِكَ مِن أَصْغَرَ وَلاَ السَّمَاءِ فِي وَلاَ الأَرْضِ

“Neither you (O Muhammad) do any deed nor recite any portion of the Qur’an, nor you (O mankind) do any deed (good or evil), but We are Witness thereof, when you are doing it. And nothing is hidden from your Lord (so much as) the weight of an atom (or small ant) on the earth or in the heaven. Not what is less than that or what is greater than that but is (written) in a Clear Record”(Yoonus:10:61)

And he was certain that Allah has decreed everything that is to be:

مُبِينٍ إِمَامٍ فِي أَحْصَيْنَاهُ شَيْءٍ وَكُلَّ وَآثَارَهُمْ قَدَّمُوا مَا وَنَكْتُبُ الْمَوْتَى نُحْيِي نَحْنُ إِنَّا

“Verily, We give life to the dead, and We record that which they send before (them), and their traces[14] and all things We have recorded with numbers (as a record) in a Clear Book” (Ya-Seen 36:12)

The will of Allah is ever executed and His power is absolute:

فِي وَلَا السَّمَاوَاتِ فِي شَيْءٍ مِن لِيُعْجِزَهُ اللَّهُ كَانَ اوَمَ قُوَّةً مِنْهُمْ أَشَدَّ وَكَانُوا قَبْلِهِمْ مِن الَّذِينَ عَاقِبَةُ كَانَ كَيْفَ فَيَنظُرُوا الْأَرْضِ فِي يَسِيرُوا أَوَلَمْ
قَدِيرًا عَلِيمًا كَانَ إِنَّهُ الْأَرْضِ

“Have they not travelled in the land, and seen what was the end of those before them – though they were superior to them in power? Allah is not such that anything in the heavens or in the earth escapes Him. Verily, He is All-Knowing, All-Omnipotent” (Fatir 35:44)

And Allah is the Creator of all things:

وَكِيلٌ شَيْءٍ لِّكُ عَلَى وَهُوَ فَاعْبُدُوهُ شَيْءٍ كُلِّ خَالِقُ هُوَ إِلاَّ إِلَهَ لا رَبُّكُمْ اللّهُ ذَلِكُمُ

“Such is Allah, your Lord! La Ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the Creator of all things. So worship Him (Alone), and He is the Wakeel (Trustee, Disposer of affairs or Guardian) over all things”(Al-An’am 6:102)

This correct understanding and deep conviction of the reality of the Divine will and decree bore many fruits which were apparent in his life, as we shall in this book. From the Holy Qur’an he understood the reality of his own self and of all men. He knew that man’s essence went back to two origins: his ancient origin when he was first created from clay, when he was formed and the soul was breathed into him, and his recent origin when he was created from a drop of sperm. Allah says:

طِينٍ مِن الْإِنسَانِ خَلْقَ وَبَدَأَ خَلَقَهُ شَيْءٍ كُلَّ أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي
مَّهِينٍ مَّاءٍ مِّن سُلَالَةٍ مِن نَسْلَهُ جَعَلَ ثُمَّ
ونَتَشْكُرُ مَّا قَلِيلًا وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ السَّمْعَ لَكُمُ وَجَعَلَ رُّوحِهِ مِن فِيهِ وَنَفَخَ سَوَّاهُ ثُمَّ

“Who made everything He has created good and He began the creation of man from clay. Then He made his offspring from semen of despised water (male and female sexual discharge). Then He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him the soul (created by Allah for that person); and He gave you hearing (ears), sight (eyes) and hearts. Little is the thanks you give!” (As-Sajdah 32:7-9)

He understood that Allah had created man with His own hand, and honoured him with a beautiful form and an upright posture. He had blessed him with wisdom, logic and discernment, and subjugated to him all that is in the heavens and on earth. Allah favoured man over much of His creation, and honoured him by sending the Messengers to him. The most wondrous manifestation of this divine honour towards man was that He made man qualified to receive His love and good that He made man qualified to receive His love and good pleasure, which could be attained by following

the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) who called man to Islam so that they might live a good life in this world and attain eternal bliss in the Hereafter. Allah says:

يَعْمَلُونَ كَانُواْ مَا بِأَحْسَنِ أَجْرَهُم وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ طَيِّبَةً حَيَاةً فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ مُؤْمِنٌ وَهُوَ أُنثَى أَوْ ذَكَرٍ مِّن صَالِحًا عَمِلَ مَنْ
“Whoever works righteousness – whether male or female – while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter)”(An-Nahl 16:97)

From the Qur’an, ‘Uthman understood the true nature of the struggle between man and the Shaytan. He knew that this enemy comes to man from before and behind, from his right and from his left, and whispers to him, tempting him to commit sin, and stirring up his desires. He used to seek the help of Allah against his enemy Iblees and he prevailed over him throughout his life.

He learned from the story of Adam with the Shaytan, as mentioned in the Qur’an, that Adam was the origin of mankind, and that the essence of Islam is absolute obedience to Allah, and that man is vulnerable to falling into sin. From the story of Adam’s sin he learned the necessity of putting one’s trust in Allah, the importance of repentance and praying for forgiveness in the life of the believer, the necessity of keeping away from envy and arrogance, and the importance of speaking in the best manner to one’s companions, because Allah says:

مُّبِينًا عَدُوًّا لِلإِنْسَانِ كَانَ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ بَيْنَهُمْ يَنزَغُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ أَحْسَنُ هِيَ الَّتِي يَقُولُواْ لِّعِبَادِي وَقُل
“And say to My slaves (i.e. the true believers of Islamic Monotheism) that they should (only) say those words that are the best. (Because) Shaytan (Satan) verily, sows a state of conflict and disagreements among them. Surely, Shaytan (Satan) is to man a plain enemy”[Al-Isra’ 17-53]

The Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, honoured ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan with Islam, and he lived by it and strove to spread its message. He learned its major and minor issues from the Book of Allah and the teachings of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), and he became one of the leaders of Islam who guided the people and whose words and deeds were taken as an example in this life. We should not forget that ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan was one of the scribes who wrote down the Revelation for the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam).

1- An-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah by al-Sallabi, 1/145
2- al-Fatawa, 13/177
3- al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Qur’an, no.5027
4- Tareekh al-Islam, ‘Ahd al-Khulafa’ al-Rashideen by al-Dhahabi, p.467
5- al-Fatawa, 11/122; al-Bidayah wa’n-Nihayah, 7/225
6- al-Bidayah wa’n-Nihayah, 7/225; Fara’id al-Kalam, p.275
7- Irshad al-‘Ibad li Isti’dad li Yaw mil-Ma’ad, p.88
8- op.cit., p.90; Fara’id al-Kalam, p.278
9- Irshad al-‘Ibad, p.91; Fara’id al-Kalam, p.278
10- al-Bayan wa’l-Tabyan fi Maqtal al-Shaheed ‘Uthman, 3/177; Fara’id al-Kalam, p.273
11- al-Bidayah wa’n-Nihayah, 7/255
12- al-Khilafah al-Rashidah wa’l-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah, p.397
13- Manhaj ar-Rasool fi Gharas ar-Rooh al-Jihadiyyah, p.10-16
14- Traces: Their footsteps and walking on the earth with their legs to the mosques for the five compulsory congregational prayers, Jihad (holy fighting in Allah’s Cause) and all other good and evil they did, and that which they leave behind.

His staying close to the Prophet (salAllaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) in Madinah

The strongest factor that shaped ‘Uthman’s Character, brought out his talents and potentials and purified his soul was keeping company with the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and studying at his hands. ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu stayed close to the Messenger (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) in Makkah after he became Muslim, and he stayed close to him in Madinah after he migrated there. ‘Uthman devoted himself to studying various branches of knowledge at the hands of the teacher and guide of mankind who had been taught by his Lord in the best manner. He was eager to learn the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah from the leader of all of mankind.

‘Uthman tells us how he stayed close to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), as he said: Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, sent Muhammad with the truth and revealed the Book to him, and I was one of those who responded to Allah and His Messenger and believed. I made the two early migrations and I became the son in-law of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and I received guidance directly from him.[1] ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu was trained according to the Qur’anic method and the one who taught him was the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). The starting point in ‘Uthman’s education came when he met the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and underwent a sudden and marvellous transformation as soon as he met the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), coming forth from darkness into light, acquiring faith and shunning kufr. He was able to bear hardships for the sake of his new religion and its pure beliefs. The personality of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was the main attraction to Islam, for he possessed the ability to attract and influence others. Allah had prepared him and moulded him and made him the most perfect human being in the history of the world. Greatness is always loved and admired by people; admirers gather around it and remain attached to it, because of that love and admiration. But in the case of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), added to that greatness was the fact that he was the Messenger of Allah, the one who received revelation from Allah and conveyed it to mankind. This added further dimension to the impact on the believers feelings towards him. He was not loved only for himself as great man are loved, but also for that divine connection. For when a believer was in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), he was also in the presence of Divine revelation. So the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was both a great human being and a great Messenger; these two qualities ultimately combined and become one, with no distinction between them. Thus the believer’s love for the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was love for the Messenger as a human being and for the human being as a Messenger. Love for Allah was connected to love for His Messenger, and the two joined together in the believer’s heart, becoming the focal point of all his emotions and the basis for his behaviour and attitudes.

This love that motivated the first generation of the Sahabah is the focus and starting point of Islamic personal development. Through the blessings of keeping company with the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and learning at his hands, ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu and the Sahabah attained a high level of faith. ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu studied at the hands of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and learned from him the Qur’an and Sunnah, the rules of recitation (tilawah) and how souls are purified. Allah says:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْاْ إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلاَّ نَعْبُدَ إِلاَّ اللّهَ وَلاَ نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلاَ يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضاً أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَقُولُواْ اشْهَدُواْ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

Say (O Muhammad (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam): “O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah (Alone), and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah.” Then, if they turn away, say: “Bear witness that we are Muslims.”(Aal ‘Imran 3:64)

He was keen to immerse himself in the teachings of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and to stay close to him during times of war and of peace. In the coming pages we will see, in sha Allah, his attitude concerning the fields of jihad, politics, social life and economics with the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) in the Madeenan period.

‘Uthman and jihad with the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam)

After the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) had settled in Madinah he started establishing the foundations of the Islamic state he began to create bonds of brotherhood between the Muhajireen and Ansar. ‘Uthman’s “brother” was Aws ibn Thabit.[2] Then the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) established his mosque and drew up a treaty with the Jews, and he started to send out military expeditions and paid attention to laying down the economic and educational foundations of the new society. ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu was one of the pillars of the Islamic state, and he did not withhold any advice, opinion or wealth. He was also present at every major event except the battle of Badr.[3]

‘Uthman and the battle of Badr

When the Muslims went out to fight the battle of Badr, ‘Uthman’s wife, Ruqayyah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was sick with the measles and was confined to her bed at the time when the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) called on the Muslims to intercept the caravan of Quraysh. ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu hastened to go out with the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), but he revived orders to stay with Ruqayyah radiyallaahu`anha and nurse her; he obeyed willingly and stayed with his wife Ruqayyah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). When her sickness grew worse and death approached, as Ruqayyah breathed her last she was longing to see her father who had gone out to Badr and her sister Zaynab who was still in Makkah. ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu looked at her through her tears, his heart breaking with sorrow.[4] She departed this life bearing witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, but she did not get to see her father the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), because he was in Badr with his noble companions, striving to make the word of Allah supreme, and he did not attend her burial. Ruqayyah was prepared for burial and her body was brought, with her grieving husband walking behind it. When the funeral reached al-Baqee’, Ruqayyah was buried there and the attendants wept and levelled the soil over the grave of Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). As they were returning, Yazeed ibn Harithah came, riding the camel of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), bringing good news that the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was safe and sound, and the mushrikeen had been killed and their heroes captured. The Muslims of Madinah received the news with rejoicing, celebrating the victory that Allah had granted to His believing slaves, but amidst the rejoicing ‘Uthman could not conceal his sorrow at the loss of Ruqayyah radiyallaahu`anha. After the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) returned, he learned of the death of Ruqayyah radiyallaahu`anha, and he went out to al-Baqee’ and stood over the grave of his daughter and prayed for forgiveness for her.[5]

‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan did not stay behind from Badr because of any shortcoming or because he wanted to avoid the battle, as is claimed by those followers of whims and desires who attack him because of his absence from Badr. He did not intend to go against the Messenger (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), because the virtue attained by those who were present at Badr was due to their obeying the Messenger (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and following him. ‘Uthman went out with the others who went out with the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), but he (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) sent him back to take care of his daughter. Thus he was doing the most important duty of obeying the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) who asked him to stay behind. The Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) gave him a share of the booty and reward, so he had a share in the booty and attained the virtue and reward of obeying and submitting to Allah and His Messenger.[6]

It was narrated that ‘Uthman ibn ‘Abd-Allah ibn Mawhab said: A man came from Egypt to perform pilgrimage to the Ka’bah, and he said: O Ibn ‘Umar, I am going to ask you about something, so tell me, for I adjure you by Allah and the sanctity of this House; do you know that ‘Uthman was absent from Badr and did not witness it? He said: Yes, but his absence from Badr was because he was married to the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and she fell sick, and the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said to him:

“You will have the reward and the share of booty of a man who was present at Badr.”[7]

It was narrated from Abu Wa’il that ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan radiyallaahu`anhu said: “On the day of Badr, I stayed behind to look after the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), and the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) gave me a share (of the booty).” Za’idah said in his hadeeth: Whoever was given a share of the booty by the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was regarded as having been there.[8] So ‘Uthman was regarded as one of the people of Badr, by consensus.[9]

‘Uthman and the battle of Uhud

At the battle of Uhud, Allah granted victory to the Muslims at the beginning of the battle, and the Muslims began to wield at the beginning of the battle, and the Muslims began to wield their swords against the mushrikeen, whose defeat appeared imminent. The standard-bearers of the mushrikeen were killed one by one, and no one could get near to retrieve the banner. The mushrikeen began to flee and the women who had been singing and banging the drums began to scream; they threw down their drums and fled towards the mountain, baring their calves. But suddenly the balance tipped, because of the archers whom the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) had commanded to stay in their position on the side of the mountain and not to move no matter what the outcome of the battle was. All but a few of them deserted their posts and came down to the field of battle seeking booty, when they saw the Muslims gathering it. Khalid ibn al-Waleed, who was the leader of the cavalry of Quraysh, took this opportunity when he saw that the mountain was bare of archers except a few. He, along with ‘Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl, launched a cavalry attack and killed the remaining archers, including their leader ‘Abd-Allah ibn Jubayr radiyallaahu`anhu, who had remained at his post with a small group. Whilst the Muslims were distracted and collecting the booty, Khalid and those who were with him attacked them from all sides and started killing them. The Muslims panicked and some of them, including ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, fled to a place near Madinah, and they did not return until the fighting stopped. Another group became confused when they heard the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). Concerning the group that fled, Allah revealed concerning them Qur’an that will be recited until the Day of Resurrection. Allah said:

حَلِيمٌ غَفُورٌ اللّهَ إِنَّ عَنْهُمْ اللّهُ عَفَا وَلَقَدْ كَسَبُواْ مَا بِبَعْضِ الشَّيْطَانُ تَزَلَّهُمُاسْ إِنَّمَا الْجَمْعَانِ الْتَقَى يَوْمَ مِنكُمْ تَوَلَّوْاْ الَّذِينَ إِنَّ
“Those of you who turned back on the day the two hosts met (i.e. the battle of Uhud), it was Shaytan (Satan) who caused them to backslide (run away from the battlefield) because of some (sins) they had earned. But Allah, indeed, has forgiven them. Surely, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing”(Aal ‘Imran 3:155)

But those who cannot see anything but that which is dictated to them by their whims and desires never quote the names of those who retreated except ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu. They accuse him and not the other Sahabah who also retreated. Should he have stayed on his own? If he had done that he would have exposed himself to danger.[10] After Allah forgave those who retreated, the ruling is very clear and there is no confusion or ambiguity. There is no room for blaming ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan radiyallaahu`anhu after that. It is enough to know that Allah has forgiven him, as is stated in the text of the Qur’an. His striving in jihad throughout his life is witness to his bravery.

The campaign of Ghatafan (Dhu Imr)

The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) mobilized the Muslims and set out with four hundred men and a number of horses, leaving ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan radiyallaahu`anhu in charge in Madinah. They captured a (mushrik) man in Dhu’l-Qussah whose name was Jabbar, from Banu Tha’labah. He was taken to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and he told him some information about his people, and said: “They will never meet you in battle; when they heard that you were coming, they fled to the mountaintops. I will go with you.” The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) called him to Islam and he became Muslim, and the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) made him the brother of Bilal. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) did not meet anyone in battle, then he came back to Madinah with no fighting having taken place. He was absent for eleven days.[11]

The campaign of Dhat al-Riqa'

The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) heard that a group from Ghatafan from (the tribes of) Tha'labah and Anmar, wanted to attack Madinah, so he set out with four hundred of his companions until he reached Sirar. Before he left, the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) appointed 'Uthman ibn 'Affan in charge of Madinah. The Muslims encountered a huge group from Ghatafan and the people drew close but no fighting occurred between them. The people were afraid of one another, until The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) led the people in offering the fear prayer, then he departed with the people. He was away from Madinah for fifteen days. [12]

Bay'at al-Radwan

When the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) halted at al-Hudaybiyah, he deemed it essential to send a representative to Quraysh, to tell them of his peaceful intentions and that he had no desire to fight, and he wanted to respect the holy places; he wanted to perform 'Umrah and then return to Madinah. The man chosen to be the representative of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) to Quraysh was Kharash ibn Ummayyah al-Khuza'i, whom he mounted on a camel called al-Tha'lab. When he entered Makkah, Quraysh killed the camel and they wanted to kill Kharash too, but the Ahabeesh stopped them. Kharash ibn Umayyah came back to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and told him what Quraysh had done. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) wanted to send another envoy to tell Quraysh of the message of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), and at first he chose 'Umar ibn al-Khattab radiyallaahu`anhu.[13] But 'Umar apologized to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and said that he preferred not to go, and he suggested to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) that he send 'Uthman instead of him.[14] He clearly explained the reason for that, which is that it is essential for anyone who mixes with the enemy to have protection. As no such protection was available to 'Umar, he suggested to the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) that he send 'Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu, because he had a tribe who could protect him from the harm of the mushrikeen until he had conveyed the message of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam).[15] "I fear for myself with regard to Quraysh, for they know how hostile I am towards them, and there is no one there from Banu 'Udayy who could protect me. But if you want, O Messenger of Allah, I will go and meet them."[16]

The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not say anything, and 'Umar said: "But I shall tell you, O Messenger of Allah, of a man who is held in high esteem in Makkah and who has more relatives and is better protected: 'Uthman ibn 'Affan." The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) called 'Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu and said: "Go to Quraysh and tell them that we have not come to fight, rather we have only come as visitors to this House, respecting its sanctity. We have our sacrificial animals with us; we will slaughter them and depart." Uthman set out and came to Baldah (a place near Makkah) where he found Quraysh. They said: "Where are you going?" He said: "The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) has sent me to you, to call you to Allah and to Islam, and to enter the religion of Allah, for Allah will make His religion prevail and will grant victory to His Prophet. Your other option is to leave him alone and let other people fight him, then if they prevail over Muhammad, that is what you want, but if Muhammad prevails then you will have the choice of entering what the people have entered or of fighting him when your power is still intact. The war has destroyed you and taken the best of your leaders." 'Uthman kept talking and telling them things they did not want to hear, and they said: "We have heard what you say, but it will never happen. He will never enter upon us by force. Go back to your companion and tell him that he is not allowed to come to us." Aban ibn Sa'eed ibn Al-'Aas stood up and welcomed him and offered him protection and said: "I think you will get what you want." Then he dismounted from the horse that he was riding, and he made 'Uthman sit in the saddle and he rode behind him, and 'Uthman entered Makkah and went to each leader in turn: Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, Safwan ibn Umayyah and others whom he had met at Baldah, and others whom he met in Makkah. They all kept telling him, "Muhammad will never enter upon us."[17] The mushrikoon suggested to 'Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu that he perform tawaf around the Ka'bah but he refused.[18] 'Uthman

conveyed the message of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) to the weak and oppressed of Makkah and gave them the glad tidings that relief was close at hand.[19] And he took a verbal message back from them to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) in which they said: “Convey our salam to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), for the One Who enabled him to camp at al-Hudaybiyah is able to cause him to enter the centre of Makkah.[20]

There were rumours among the Muslims that ‘Uthman had been killed, then the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) called his companions to swear allegiance to him, pledging to fight the mushrikeen. The Sahabah responded, swearing loyalty unto death[21], except for al-Jadd ibn Qays, who was a hypocrite.[22] According to another report, the pledge was to remain steadfast[23], and according to yet another report it was a pledge not to flee.[24] There is no contradiction here, because a pledge to remain loyal unto death means a pledge to remain steadfast and not flee.[25] The first one to make this pledge was Abu Sinan ‘Abd-Allah ibn Wahb al-Asadi.[26] Then the rest of the people came forth and made the same pledge as he had.[27] Salamah ibn al-Akwa’ swore allegiance three times: with the first group of people, in the middle and with the last group.[28] The Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said of his right hand, “This is the hand of ‘Uthman”, and he put it in his other hand.[29] The number of Sahabah from whom the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) accepted the oath of allegiance beneath the tree was one thousand and four hundred.[30] The Qur’an speaks of the people who gave the oath of allegiance (Bay’at al-Radwan), and their virtue is mentioned in many Qur’anic verses and ahadeeth, such as the following:

1 – Allah says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَن نَّكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهُ اللَّهَ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

“Verily, those who give Bay’ah (pledge) to you (O Muhammad (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) they are giving Bay’ah (pledge) to Allah. The Hand of Allah is over their hands. Then whosoever breaks his pledge, breaks it only to his own harm; and whosoever fulfils what he has covenanted with Allah, He will bestow on him a great reward” (Al-Fath 48:10)

2 – Allah says:

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَمَن يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا
لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

“No blame or sin is there upon the blind, nor is there blame or sin upon the lame, nor is there blame or sin upon the sick (that they go not for fighting). And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), He will admit him to Gardens beneath which rivers flow (Paradise); and whosoever turns back, He will punish him with a painful torment. Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave the Bay’ah (pledge) to you (O Muhammad (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) under the tree, He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down As-Sakeenah (calmness and tranquility) upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory”(Al-Fath 48:17,18)

3 – Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah radiyallaahu`anhu said:

The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said to us on the day of al-Hudaybiyah:

“You are the best people on earth.”

There were one thousand and four hundred of us and if I could see I would show you where the tree stood.[31] This hadeeth clearly speaks of the virtue of those who were present at the tree. At that time there were a number of Muslims in Makkah, Madinah and other places, but some of the Shi’ah take this hadeeth as evidence that ‘Ali was better than ‘Uthman because ‘Ali was among those to whom these words were addressed, and he was among those who swore allegiance beneath the tree, whereas ‘Uthman was absent that day. But this argument is baseless, because the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) swore allegiance on ‘Uthman’s behalf, so ‘Uthman is equal to them in

virtue in this particular case, and the hadeeth is not intended to differentiate between them.[32]

With regard to al-Hudaybiyah, al-Muhibb al-Tabari mentioned a number of qualities that were exclusive to 'Uthman. For example, he was the only one for whom the hand of the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) represented his hand, when the Sahabah swore allegiance and 'Uthman was absent. He was the only one who conveyed the message of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) to the Muslim prisoners in Makkah, and the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) approved of 'Uthman's refusal to perform tawaf when he sent him with that message.[33] It was narrated from Iyas ibn Salamah from his father that the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) swore allegiance on behalf of 'Uthman, with one hand in the other, and the people said: Congratulations to Abu 'Abd-Allah; he can perform tawaf around the Ka'bah safely. The Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam): "No matter how long he stays in Makkah, he will not perform tawaf until I do."[34]

'Uthman was falsely accused of not having sworn allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in Bay'at al-Radwan, when he was absent. This is one of the accusations that were made against 'Uthman when the turmoil (fitnah) arose which was aimed at destroying the foundations of his caliphate.[35] We will discuss this in further detail below, in sha Allah. It was narrated that Anas said: When the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) enjoined Bay'at al-Radwan 'Uthman ibn 'Affan had been sent by the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) to the people of Makkah. The people swore allegiance to him, then he said: " 'Uthman is doing an errand for Allah and His Messenger," and he struck the ground with one of his hands. The hand of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) that represented 'Uthman was better than their hands that represented themselves.[36]

Intercession of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan for 'Abd-Allah ibn Abi'l-Sarh at the conquest of Makkah

When the conquest of Makkah came, 'Abd-Allah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi'l-Sarh hid with 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, who brought him to stand before the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam). He said: "O Messenger of Allah, accept the allegiance of 'Abd-Allah." He raised his head and looked at him three times, refusing each time, but he accepted his allegiance after the third time. Then he returned to his companions and said: "Was there not among you a wise man who would get up and deal with this man and kill him, when he saw me withholding my hand and refusing to accept his allegiance?" They said: We did not know, O Messenger of Allah, what you were thinking of; why didn't you gesture with your eyes? He said: "It is not befitting for a Prophet to deceive with his eyes."[37]

According to another report: when the conquest of Makkah came, the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) granted safety to the people except four, of whom he said: "Kill them even if you find them clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah: 'Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl, 'Abd-Allah ibn Khatal, Maqees ibn Habbabah and 'Abd-Allah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi'l-Sarh.[38] 'Abd-Allah ibn Khatal was caught when he was clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah; Sa'd ibn Harith and 'Ammar raced to kill him, and Sa'd beat 'Ammar, as he was the younger of the two men, and he killed him. 'Ikrimah travelled by sea and a storm came. The crew of the boat said: "Be sincere towards the Almighty, for your gods cannot avail you anything here." 'Ikrimah said: "By Allah, if nothing can help me on the sea except sincerity towards the Almighty, then nothing else will help me on land. O Allah, I promise that if You save me from this predicament, I will go to Muhammad and put my hand in his; I am certain that I will find him forgiving and generous." So he came and became Muslim. 'Abd-Allah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi'l-Sarh hid with 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and when the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) called the people to swear allegiance, 'Uthman brought him and made him stand before

the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), and the rest is as we have mentioned above.[39]

It was narrated that ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Abbas said: ‘Abd-Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi’l-Sarh was a scribe for the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), then the Shaytan caused him to slip and he went and joined the kuffar. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) ordered that he be killed on the day of the Conquest, but ‘Uthman asked to be allowed to give him protection and the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) gave him permission.[40] Ibn Ishaq mentioned the reason why the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) ordered that Sa’d be killed and why ‘Uthman interceded for him. He said: The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) ordered that he be killed because he had become Muslim, and he used to write down the Wahy (Revelation) for the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), then he apostatized and became a mushrik, and went back to Quraysh. He fled to ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, who was his brother through breastfeeding, and he hid him until he brought him to the people of Makkah, and asked for a pardon for him. Ibn Hisham said: Then he became Muslim after that, and ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab appointed him for some tasks, as did ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan after him.[41]

The campaign of Tabook

In 9 AH, Heraclius turned his attention towards Arabia, seeking to attack it and absorb it into his empire. He ordered his troops to prepare and await his instructions to advance.. News of that reached the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and he told his companions to prepare for jihad. It was a blazing hot summer and the country was suffering drought and hardship. Even though the Muslims could, by their faith, withstand the brutal heat and set out for jihad across the burning sands of the desert, where would they get the equipment that they needed for jihad? The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) urged them to donate, and each person gave what he could afford. The women brought their jewellery to the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), and he used to it to help prepare the army, but these donations could not help much with the huge requirements of the army. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) looked at the huge ranks of men who were preparing for battle and he said: “Who will equip them and Allah will forgive him?” No sooner had ‘Uthman heard this call of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) but he hastened to seek the forgiveness and pleasure of Allah, and thus this pressing need was met by the generosity of ‘Uthman.[42] He (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) supplied the army’s every need, down to the last rope and bridle.

Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri said: ‘Uthman supplied the army of Tabook with nine hundred and forty camels, and sixty horses to bring the number to one thousand. ‘Uthman brought ten thousand dinars to equip the army and placed the money before the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and the Messenger (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) began turning it over with his hand saying,

“No deed can harm ‘Uthman after today” twice.[43]

‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu was the one who spent the most on this campaign.[44] ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Habbab spoke of the spending of ‘Uthman when he said: I was present with the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) when he was urging the people to spend on the army of Tabook. ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan radiyallaahu`anhu stood up and said: “O Messenger of Allah, I pledge to give two hundred camels with their saddles and equipment for the sake of Allah.” Then the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) urged the people to spend on the army and ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan stood up and said: “O Messenger of Allah, I pledge to give three hundred camels with their saddles and equipment for the sake of Allah.” I saw the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) coming down from the minbar saying:

“Nothing could harm ‘Uthman, no matter what he does after this; nothing could harm ‘Uthman, no matter what he does after this.” [45]

It was narrated that ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Sumarah radiyallaahu`anhu said: ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan radiyallaahu`anhu came to the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) with one thousand dinars in his garment, when the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was equipping the army of Tabook, and the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) started turning the coins over with his hand and saying,

“Nothing could harm ‘Uthman, no matter what he does after this.” [46]

And he repeated it several times.

It seems that he was the only sponsor for this new community. The Messenger (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) marched at the head of the army until they reached a place called Tabook, halfway between Madinah and Damascus. There they heard the good news that Heraclius, who had been preparing to march from Damascus, had lost his resolve and had left Damascus, giving up on his desperate plans after hehearing that the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and his companions had set out to meet him. The army returned with all the equipment that ‘Uthman had supplied to them, but did he take anything back? Not at all, and it was unlikely that he would do such a thing. He remained quick to respond to every gesture of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) when he asked anew for the people to spend for the sake of Allah.[47]

1- Fada’il as-Sahabah by Abu ‘Abd-Allah Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 1/597. Its isnad is saheeh.
2- Al-Ameen Dhu’n-Noorayn by Mahmoud Shakir, p.40
3- Manhaj at-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyyah by Ahmad Qutub, p.34, 35
4- Nisa’ Ahl al-Bayt by Ahmad Khaleel Jumu’ah, p. 491-504
5- Dima’ ala Qamees ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, p.20
6- Kitab al-Imamah wa’l-Radd ‘ala al-Rafidah by al-Asbahani, p.302
7- al-Bukhari, no. 3698 at-Tirmidhi 3706
8- al-Imamah wa’l Radd ‘ala al-Rafidah by al-Asbahani, p.304
9- ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, by Sadiq ‘Arjoon, p.47
10- Al-Ameen Dhu’n-Noorayn by Mahmoud Shakir, p.49
11- al-Rawd al-Anf, 3/137; al-Tabaqat by Ibn Sa’d, 2/34, 35
12- Al-Ameen Dhu’n-Noorayn by Mahmoud Shakir, p.52, 53
13- Ghazwat al-Hudaybiyah by Abu Faris, p. 83
14- al-Maghazi by Muhammad ‘Umar al-Waqidi, 2/600
15- al-Maghazi by Muhammad ‘Umar al-Waqidi, 2/600
16- al-Maghazi by Muhammad ‘Umar al-Waqidi, 2/600
17- Zad al-Ma’ad, 3/290; al-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah by Ibn Hisham, 3/344
18- Zad al-Ma’ad, 3/290
19- Zad al-Ma’ad, 3/290
20- Ghazwat al-Hudaybiyah by Abu Faris, p. 85
21- al-Bukhari, hadeeth no. 4169
22- al-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah fi Daw’ al-Masadir al-Asliyyah, p.486
23- al-Bukhari, no.4169
24- Muslim, no.1856
25- al-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah fi Daw’ an-Masadir al-Asliyyah, p.486
26- ibid
27- ibid
28- Zad al-Ma’ad, 3/291
29- Saheeh al-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah, p.404

30- Muslim (1485)
31- Al-Bukhari no 4154, Muslim, 1856
32- Fath al-Bari, 7/433
33- al-Riyadh an-Nadrah fi Manaqib al'Asharah, p.460, 491
34- op. cit., p.491; there is some weakness in its isnad.
35- Siyar as-Salaf al-Saliheen, 1/181; its isnad is da'eef, but the hadeeth is saheeh. Sunan at-Tirmidhi, no.3702
36- as-Saarim al-Maslool 'alaa Shaatami Rasool, p.109
37- Adwaa' al-Bayan fi Tareekh al-Qur'an by Sabir Abu Sulayman, p.79
38- Ibid
39- op. cit., p.80
40- ibid.
41- as-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah by Ibn Hisham, 4/57,58
42- Fath al-Bari, 7/67; Khulafa' al-Rasool, p.250; al-'Asharah al-Mubashsharoona bi'l-Jannah by Muhammad Salih 'Awad, p.53
43- Sunan at-Tirmidhi, no.3701; Saheeh al-Tawtheeq, p.26
44- as-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah fi Daw' al-Masadir al-Asliyyah, p.615
45- Sunan at-Tirmidhi, no.3700
46- Sunan at-Tirmidhi, no.3701
47- Khulafa' al-Rasool, p.138; al-'Asharah al-Mubasharoona bi'l-Jannah, p.31

His social life in Madinah

His marriage to Umm Kulthoom in 3 AH

‘Umm Kulthoom radiyallaahu`anha is known by her kunyah and her name is not known, except that Al-Hakim narrated from Mus’ab az-Zubayri that her name was Umayyah and that she was older than Fatimah radiyallaahu`anha.[48]

Sa’eed ibn al-Musayyab said: ‘Uthman’s wife Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) died, and the husband of Hafsah bint ‘Umar also died. ‘Umar came to ‘Uthman and said: Do you want to marry Hafsah? But ‘Uthman had heard the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) speaking of her, so he did not answer him. ‘Umar mentioned that to the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and he said: “How about a better idea? I will marry Hafsah, and ‘Uthman can marry someone better than her: Umm Kulthoom.”[49]

According to a report by al-Bukhari, ‘Umar said: The husband of Hafsah bint ‘Umar, Khunays ibn Hudhafah al-Suhami, died. He was one of the companions of the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and he died in Madinah. ‘Umar said: I went to ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan and suggested that he marry Hafsah bint ‘Umar. I said: If you wish, I will give Hafsah in marriage to you. He said: I will think about it. A few days passed, then he met me and said: I do not think that I want to get married right now. ‘Umar said: Then I met Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq and I said: If you wish, I will give Hafsah bint ‘Umar in marriage to you. Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq remained silent and he did not give me any answer, and I was more upset about that than I was with ‘Uthman. A few days passed, then the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) proposed marriage to her and I gave her in marriage to him. Abu Bakr met me and said: Perhaps you were upset with me when you offered Hafsah in marriage to me but I did not give you an answer? ‘Umar said: Yes. He said: Nothing kept me from answering you when you made that offer except I did not want to disclose the secret of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). If the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) had decided not to marry her I would have accepted her.[50]

The Mother of the Believers ‘Aa’ishah radiyallaahu`anha also spoke of the marriage of Umm Kulthoom to ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu. She said: When the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) arranged the marriage of his daughter. Umm Kulthoom, he said to Umm Ayman: “Prepare my daughter Umm Kulthoom for marriage and present her to ‘Uthman, and beat the daff in front of her.” She did that and the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said “O my daughter, how did you find your husband?” She said: The best of husbands.[51]

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah radiyallaahu`anhu that the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) stood at the door of the mosque and said:

“O ‘Uthman, Jibreel has told me that Allah wants you to marry Umm Kulthoom for a dowry similar to that of Ruqayyah and to treat her with similar kindness.” [52]

That was in Rabee’ al-Awwal of 3 AH, and he consummated the marriage with her in Jumada al-Aakhirah.

The death of ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu

In Jumada al-Oola of 4 AH, ‘Abd-Allah, the son of ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu from Ruqayyah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), died when he was six years old. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) offered the funeral prayer for him and his father ‘Uthman went down in his grave to receive his body and lay him to rest.[53] This was a great trial for ‘Uthman, and how many are the trials in the lives of those who call people to Allah.

The death of Umm Kulthoom radiyallaahu`anha

Umm Kulthoom stayed with ‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them both) until her death in Sha’ban of 9AH as the result of illness. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) offered

the funeral prayer for her and sat by her grave. It was narrated from Anas ibn Malik that he saw the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) sitting by the grave of Umm Kulthoom. He said: I saw his eyes flowing with tears and he said:

"Is there any man among you who did not do anything last night?" Abu Talhah said: Me. He said: "Go down in her grave." [54]

It was narrated that Layla bint Qanif al-Thaqafiyyah said: I was among those who washed Umm Kulthoom the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) when she died. The first thing that the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) gave to us was the waist-wrapper, then the chemise, then the head cover, then the large wrapper, then after that she was wrapped in another cloth. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was at the door with her shroud, handing the pieces to us one by one.[55]

It was narrated by Ibn Sa'd that 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, al-Fadl ibn 'Abbas and Usamah ibn Zayd went down in her grave with Abu Talhah (to lay her to rest), and that the ones who washed her were Asma' bint 'Umays and Safiyyah bint 'Abd al-Muttalib.[56]

'Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu was deeply grieved by the loss of Umm Kulthoom, and the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) saw 'Uthman walking broken-hearted with signs of grief at his loss on his face. He came to him and said: "If we had a third one, we would give her in marriage to you, O 'Uthman."[57] This is indicative of the love of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) for 'Uthman and a of 'Uthman's loyalty and respect towards his Prophet. It also a rejection of the superstitious attitude that people usually adopt in such circumstances, for the decree of Allah is ever executed and nothing can ward off His decree.[58]

His economic contribution to the establishment of the state

'Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu was one of the richest of those on whom Allah had bestowed wealth. He engaged in trade and was very wealthy, but he used this wealth in obedience to Allah, seeking His pleasure and that which is with Him. Thus, he was always first to do good and spend, and he did not fear poverty. Among the many examples of his spending are the following:

The well of Bi'r Roomah

When the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) came to Madinah he found that there was very little fresh water there and there was no source of fresh water in Madinah except the well of Bi'r Roomah. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

"Who will buy Bi'r Roomah and share it with the Muslims in return for reward in Paradise?" [59]

And he said:

"Who will dig the well of Bi'r Roomah and Paradise will be his?" [60]

Before the arrival of the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), no one could drink from Bi'r Roomah except in return for payment. When the Muhajiroon came to Madinah, they did not like the water: A man from Banu Ghifar had a well called Roomah and he used to sell water from it by the bucketful. The Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "Will you sell it in return for a spring in Paradise?" He said: O Messenger of Allah, my family and I do not have anything else. News of that reached 'Uthman and he bought it for thirty-five thousand dirhams, then he came to the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and he said: Will you promise me in return for it the same as you promised him? He said: "Yes." He said: Then I give it to the Muslims.[61]

And it was said that Roomah was a spring that belonged to a Jew who used to sell its water to the Muslims, then 'Uthman ibn 'Affan bought it from the Jew for twenty thousand dirhams and donated it for the rich and poor and wayfarers.[62]

Expansion of the Prophet's Mosque

After the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) built his mosque in Madinah, the Muslims would gather there to offer the five daily prayers and to listen to the speeches of the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in which he would issue commands and prohibitions, and they learned about their religion in the mosque. They would set out from the mosque for their campaigns and return to it when they came back. Hence the mosque became too small for the people, and the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) asked some of the Sahabah to buy the land next to the mosque so that the mosque could be expanded and made big enough to accommodate all the people. He said:

"Who will buy the land of So and so add it to the mosque in return for something good for him in Paradise?" [63]

'Uthman ibn 'Affan radiyallaahu`anhu bought it with his own money for twenty-five thousand dirhams, or for twenty thousand, then it was added to the mosque,[64] which then became large enough to accommodate the Muslims.

Tabook and the generosity of 'Uthman

When the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) wanted to set out on the campaign to Tabook, he urged the wealthy Sahabah to spend on equipping the army that the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was mobilizing to fight the Byzantines. The companions of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) spent whatever they could afford, and 'Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu spent a huge amount that no one else could match. This has been described above in the discussion on his role in the campaign to Tabook. [65]

48- ad-Duhah an-Nabawiyyah al-Shareefah, by Farooq Hamadah, p.45,46
49- Mustadarak al-Hakim, 4/49; al-Athar by Abu Yoosuf, no.1957
50- al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Nikah, no.5122
51- as-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah by Abu Shahbah, 2/231; Dima' 'ala Qamees 'Uthman, p.22
52- Sunan Ibn Majah, no.110. Its isnad includes 'Uthman ibn Khalid, who is da'eef (weak).
53- Al-Kamil by Ibn al-Atheer, 2/130; Dima' 'ala Qamees 'Uthman, p.22
54- al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Jama'iz, no.1342
55- Sunan Abi Dawood, no. 3157
56- at-Tabaqat by Ibn Sa'd, 8/39; ad-Duhah an-Nabawiyyah, p.48
57- Majma' az-Zawa'id by al-Haythami, 9/83; its isnad is hasan because of corroborating reports.
58- Al-Khulafa' al-Rashideen : A'mal wa Ahdath, by Dr.Ameen al-Qadah, p.73
59- Narrated by al-Bukhari, no.2778 in a mu'allaq report. It is saheeh because there are corroborating reports.
60- Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi bi Sharh Sunan at-Tirmidhi, 10/196
61- Fath al-Bari, 5/408; al-Hikmah fi'l Da'wah ila Allah, p.231
62- Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmidhi 3703 by al-Albani, 3/209, Sunan an-Nasa'i, no.2921
63- Saheeh Sunan an-Nasa'I, (3638) and at-Tirmidhi (3703)
64- A'lam al-Muslimeen by Khalid al-Baytar, 3/41
65- al-Hikmah fi'l Da'wa ila Allah, p.231

Ahadeeth of the Messenger (salAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) about 'Uthman ibn 'Affan

What was narrated about his virtues alongside others

'Open the gate for him and give him the glad tidings of Paradise in return for a calamity that will befall him'

It was narrated that Abu Moosa radiyallaahu`anhu said: I was with the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in one of the gardens of Madinah when a man came and asked for the gate to be opened. The Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "Open the gate for him and give him glad tidings of Paradise." I opened the gate and saw it was Abu Bakr, and I gave him the glad tidings of what the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had said, and he praised Allah. Then another man asked for the gate to be opened, and the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "Open the gate for him and give him the glad tidings of Paradise." I opened the gate and saw it was 'Umar, and I gave him glad tidings of what the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had said, and he praised Allah. Then another man asked for the gate to be opened, and (the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam)) said: "Open the gate for him and give him the glad tidings of Paradise in return for a calamity that will befall him." It was 'Uthman, and I told him what the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had said, and he praised Allah then he said: Allah is the One Whose help I seek.[1]

This hadeeth speaks of the virtue of the three men mentioned, namely Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman, and states that they are among the people of Paradise. It also speaks of the virtue of Abu Moosa, and shows that it is permissible to praise a man to his face if there is no worry about self admiration and the like. And it contains an obvious miracle, in that the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) foretold the calamity that would befall 'Uthman, and that all three would persevere in faith and guidance.[2]

'Be still, O Uhud, for there is no one on you but a Prophet, a siddeeq and two martyrs'

It was narrated that Anas radiyallaahu`anhu said: The Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) climbed Uhud, accompanied by Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman, and (the mountain) shook. He said:

"Be still, O Uhud",and I think he struck it with his foot – " for there is no one on you but a Prophet, a siddeeq and two martyrs" [3]

'Be calm for there is no one on you but a Prophet, a Siddeeq or a martyr'

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was on Hira', along with Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, Ali', Talhah and az-Zubayr, and the rock shook. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

"Be calm, for there is no one on you but a Prophet or a Siddeeq or a martyr." [4]

The modesty of 'Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu

It was narrated from Yahya ibn Sa'eed ibn al-'Aas that Sa'eed ibn al-'Aas told him that 'Aa'ishah the wife of the Prophet (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and 'Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu told him that Abu Bakr asked for permission to enter upon the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) when he was lying down on his bed, wrapping himself in the cover of 'Aa'ishah. He gave permission to Abu Bakr (to enter) when he was like that, and he fulfilled his need and went away. Then 'Umar asked for permission to enter and he gave him permission (to enter) when he was like that, and he fulfilled his need then he went away. 'Uthman said: Then I asked permission to enter and he sat up and said to 'Aa'ishah:

“Cover yourself properly.”

I fulfilled my need then I went away. ‘Aa’ishah said: O Messenger of Allah, why did I not see you stirring for Abu Bakr and ‘Umar as you did for ‘Uthman? The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:

“ ‘Uthman is a shy man, and I was afraid that if I gave him permission to enter when I was in that state, he would not tell me of his need.” [5]

The shyness of the angels before ‘Uthman

It was narrated from Abu Salamah ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman that ‘Aa’ishah said: The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was lying down in my house with his thigh or shin uncovered. Abu Bakr asked for permission to enter and he let him in while he was in that state, and he spoke to him. Then ‘Umar asked for permission to enter and he let him in while he was in that state, and he spoke to him. Then ‘Uthman asked permission to enter and the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) sat up and straightened his garment – Muhammad (one of the narrators) said: I do not say that this all happened on one day – and he came in and he spoke to him. When he left, ‘Aa’ishah said: Abu Bakr came in and you did not stir for him, and ‘Umar came in and you did not stir for him, then ‘Uthman came in and you sat up and straightened your garment. He said:

“Should I not feel shy before a man before whom the angels feel shy?”[6]

Al-Mannawi said: The main characteristics of ‘Uthman is modesty, and modesty results from great respect for the One Who is looking at him as well as awareness of some faults that he can see in himself. It is as if he was overwhelmed by the glory of Allah and saw in himself some faults and shortcomings. These are of the lofty qualities of those who are close to Allah. Thus ‘Uthman was raised in status, so the chosen one of Allah’s creation (i.e., the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam)) felt a sense of modesty and shyness before him, just as the one who loves Allah loves His close friends, and the one who fears Allah will be feared by all.[7]

“The most sincere (of this ummah) in modesty is ‘Uthman.”

It was narrated that Anas ibn Malik said: The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:

“The most compassionate of my ummah is Abu Bakr, the strictest in adherence to religion is ‘Umar, the most sincere in modesty is ‘Uthman, the most knowledgeable about halal and haram is Mu’adh ibn Jabal, the most knowledgeable about the Book of Allah is Ubayy, the most knowledgable about inheritance is Zayd ibn Thabit. Every nation has a keeper of secrets, and the keeper of secrets of this ummah is Abu ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah.”[8]

Ahadeeth from the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) about the turmoil (Fitnah) during which ‘Uthman would be killed

‘Whoever is saved from three things is indeed saved’

It was narrated from ‘Abd-Allah ibn Hawalah that the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:

“Whoever is saved from three things is indeed saved: my death, the Dajjal and the murder of a caliph who is persevering in adhering to the truth and fulfilling his duty.”[9]

It is well known that the caliph who was killed when he was persevering in adhering to the truth and fulfilling his duty was ‘Uthman. Circumstantial evidence suggest that the caliph who is referred to in this hadeeth is ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan radiyallaahu`anhu. This Hadeeth – and Allah knows best – points to the importance of avoiding partaking in this turmoil or killing in word or deed. “In deed”

means taking part by inciting and stirring up turmoil or killing, etc, and “in word” means talking about it, repeating fabrications about it and saying things that are not true. Thus the hadeeth applies to the ummah in general, not just those who were alive at the time of the fitnah that claimed the life of ‘Uthman.[10]

The one who is covering his head will be killed on that day

It was narrated that Ibn ‘Umar said: The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) mentioned turmoil and a man passed by and he said:

“The one who is covering his head will be killed unlawfully on that day.”

He said: I looked and saw that it was ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan.[11]

‘On that day this man will be following right guidance’

It was narrated that Ka’b ibn ‘Urjah said:

The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) mentioned some turmoil and gave the impression that it would soon come to pass. A man passed by with his head covered and the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “On that day this man will be following right guidance.” I rushed and grabbed ‘Uthman by the (upper) arm, then I turned to face the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and said: This man? He said: “This man.”[12]

‘There will be turmoil like the horns of cows, but this man and those who are with him will be following the truth’

It was narrated that Murrah al-Bahzi said: I was with the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and Bahz – one of the narrators of the hadeeth – said: The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:

“There will be turmoil like the horns of cows, but this man and those who are with him will be following the truth”

I went and grabbed him by his cloak, and saw that it was ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan.[13]

‘On that day, this man and those who are with him will be following truth and right guidance’

It was narrated that Abu’l-Ash’ath said: Many people stood up to give speeches in (Baitul-Maqdis) during the governorship of Mu’awiyah radiyallaahu`anhu and the last one to speak with Murrah ibn Ka’b, who said: Were it not for a hadeeth that I heard from the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), I would not have stood up (to speak). I heard the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) mention a turmoil that was close at hand, then a man whose head was covered passed by and he said:

“On that day, this man and those who are with him will be following truth and right guidance.”

I said: This man, O Messenger of Allah? And I turned him to face him. He said: “This man.” That was ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu. [14]

‘You should be with the trustworthy one and his companions’

It was narrated from Abu Habeebah that he entered the house when ‘Uthman was being besieged, and he heard Abu Hurayrah asking permission to speak to ‘Uthman. Permission was given to him, and he stood up and praised Allah, then he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi

wa sallam) say:

“You will face turmoil and differences after I am gone – or differences and turmoil.” One of the people said to him: Who could help us, O Messenger of Allah? He said: “You should be with the trustworthy one and his companions”

And he pointed to ‘Uthman as he said it.[15]

‘If the hypocrites want you to shed it (the caliphate), do not shed it’

It was narrated from ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Aamir, from al-Nu’man ibn Basheer, that ‘Aa’ishah said: The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) sent for ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan and the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) went to him and spoke with him. When we saw the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) we turned to one another, and the last thing he said to him was when he struck him on the shoulder and said:

“O ‘Uthman, Allah will give you a garment to wear (i.e., the caliphate), so if the hypocrites want you to shed it, do not shed it until you meet me.

Three times. I (al-Nu’man) said to her: O Mother of the Believers, why didn’t you narrate this before? She said: I forgot it and by Allah I did not remember it. He said: I narrated it to Mu’awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan and he did not approve of what I told him until he wrote to the Mother of the Believers asking her to write to him about it, and she wrote to him about it.[16]

‘The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) gave me some advice and I am going to persevere with it’

It was narrated from Abu Sahlah that ‘Aa’ishah said: The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:

“Call one of my companions for me”

I said: Abu Bakr? He said: “No.” I said: ‘Uthman? He said: “Yes.” When he came he said (to me): “Move away,” then he started to converse with him, and ‘Uthman’s colour changed. When he was besieged in his house, we said: O Ameer al-Mu’mineen, will you not fight? He said: No. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) gave me some advice and I am going to persevere with it.[17]

This hadeeth shows that deep love that the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) had for ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu and how great was his concern for the welfare of the ummah after he was gone. He told him things that had to do with this turmoil that would end with his death, and he urged him to keep it secret, so that all that we know about it is what ‘Uthman stated during the turmoil, when it was said to him: Will you not fight? And he said: No. The Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) gave me some advice and I am going to persevere with it.[18]

From these words of his it is clear that the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) taught him the correct attitude when turmoil breaks out, which will stop the turmoil spreading further. In some reports there is additional statement which reveals some of the contents of this secret conversation, and states that the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said to him: “If they ask you to shed the shirt with which Allah has clothed you (i.e. the caliphate), do not do it.”[19] The content of the advice mentioned by ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu had to do with the turmoil and encouragement to be patient and not give up the caliphate, and the hadeeth indicated that he would be caliph one day.

It seems that there was advice and guidance about this turmoil which was known only to ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu, as the Prophet was keen to keep it secret, as is clear from his telling ‘Aa’ishah radiyallaahu`anha to move away when he wanted to converse privately with ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu. He also spoke with him in a low voice, despite the fact there was no one else

there, until his colour changed, which is indicative of the seriousness of the conversation. The fact that ‘Aa’ishah made a connection between this private conversation and turmoil and the turmoil clearly indicates that this conversation was about the turmoil during which ‘Uthman was killed, and contained advice from the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) to ‘Uthman to adopt the right stance and not give up the caliphate. The Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) did not only warning of the turmoil; he spoke of that in many ahadeeth as we have seen above, but in this private conversation there were other things beyond just saying that turmoil would happen, and he urged him to keep it secret for a reason, and Allah knows best what it was.

This hadeeth clearly explains the reason why ‘Uthman refused to fight during the siege, and why he refused to give up the caliphate when the people suggested that to him. Researchers and historians have wondered what the reason for this attitude was, and they were confused as to why ‘Uthman radiyallaahu`anhu took this stance. The murder of ‘Uthman was one of many events that were foretold by the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) during his lifetime, and this is the matter of the unseen. Knowledge of the unseen is one of the attributes of Allah and none of His creation has the power to know the unseen. This was knowledge that Allah granted to the Prophet (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and ordered him to convey it to the people.[20] Allah says:

قُل لاَّ أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلاَ ضَرًّا إِلاَّ مَا شَاءَ اللّهُ وَلَوْ كُنتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لاَسْتَكْثَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ إِنْ أَنَاْ إِلاَّ نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

Say (O Muhammad (salAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam)): "I possess no power of benefit or hurt to myself except as Allah wills. If I had the knowledge of the Ghaib (unseen), I should have secured for myself an abundance of wealth, and no evil should have touched me. I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings unto people who believe." (Al-A’raf 7:188)

1-al-Bukhari, no.3695
2- Sharh al-Nawawi ‘Ala Saheeh Muslim, 15/170, 171
3- al-Bukhari, no.3697
4- Muslim, no.2417
5- Muslim, no.2402
6- Muslim, no.2401
7- Fayd al-Qadeer by al-Mannawi, 4/302
8- Musnad al-Imam Ahmad, Baqi Kitab Musnad al-Mukthireen, Bab Musnad Anas ibn Malik, 12493
9- Al-Musnad, 4/106, edited by Ahmad Shakir
10- Fitnah Maqtal ‘Uthman, by Dr. Muhammad ‘Abd-Allah al-Ghaban, 1/44
11- Fada’il al-Sahabah, 1/551. Its isnad is hasan and Ahmad (2/155).
12- Saheeh Sunan Ibn Majah, 1/24 (111)
13- Musnad Ahmad, Musnad al-Shamiyeen, Bab Hadeeth Ka’b ibn Murrah al-Sulami aw Murrah ibn Ka’b, hadeeth no 17602 (4/236)
14- Fada’il al-Sahabah, 1/500. Its isnad is saheeh and Al-Musnad 2/345
15- Musnad Ahmad, Baqi Musnad al-Ansar, 24045 (6/87)
16- Fada’il al-Sahabah, 1/206. Its isnad is saheeh Al-Musnad (6/52)
17- Ibid.
18- Fada’il as-Sahabah, 1/613. Its isnad is saheeh. See also at-Tabaqat, 3/66,67
19- Fitnah Maqtal ‘Uthman, by Muhammad ‘Abd-Allah al-Ghaban, 1/48
20- Ibid.